

Cavalry charge

Mel Rutherford meets world-renowned photographer Henry Dallal, who takes you this time to India, home of the last horse warriors



Henry Dallal is a world-renowned photographer, and combines work with his passion for horses and travel

"Call me back when you've got your act together, ok?" Henry Dallal is not a man to be messed with. Lucky for me, I'm not on the other end of this particular phone call, but it makes for a shaky introduction to the author of new book, 'Horse Warriors – India's 61st Cavalry'.

I am standing outside the tiny front door of his house, tucked away along a quiet Knightsbridge mews, on the promise that Henry will be there to

Henry took over 10,000 photos in India



Below right: Housed in the City Palace, Jaipur, this giant urn is one of two made in 1896 from the largest pieces of silver in the world. In 1902, they took water from the Ganges across to England, for the Coronation of King Edward VII



Above: Colonel 'Pinka' Virk, Commandant of the Regiment, addresses his troops. Right: 61st Cavalry inside City Palace, Jaipur.

Below: The President's Body Guard (PBG) inside the President's Palace. These expert horsemen are also trained combat paratroopers and armoured vehicle crewmen



It's a fact!

The President's Body Guard originates from the Governor's Troops of Mughals, established in 1773 by the Governor General, Warren Hastings.

greet me. But I am early and it is he who arrives bang on time – albeit a little flustered as he alights a black cab, mobile phone pasted to one ear.

But quicker than it takes him to end his presumably unsatisfactory phone call, Henry switches to relaxed and polite, and returns my handshake with a warm smile. Apologising profusely in his Iranian-lilted accent for keeping me waiting, he ushers me through the door.

Narrow stairs lead down to the dimly lit house-come-studio, every inch of wall crookedly lined with horsey photography. I've not even had the chance to sink into the worn leather sofa, but Henry's passion for horses is already obvious.

Labour of love

'Horse Warriors' follows Henry's first book, 'Pageantry and Performance', a stunning portrayal of the Household Cavalry. His latest work couldn't be more different – India is home to the very last working cavalry, a regiment steeped in history and tradition.



"The book took me three years – I put my heart and soul into it"

"You can't just shoot a whole book in one trip, it takes years," Henry explains as he presents me with a satisfyingly heavy copy of 'Horse Warriors'. Not surprising, considering he

took over 10,000 photographs for the book, of which 224 feature and "four or five are a work of art", he says, gesturing to several framed pictures dominating the wall. "It's taken me

Words: Mel Rutherford. Photos: Henry Dallal

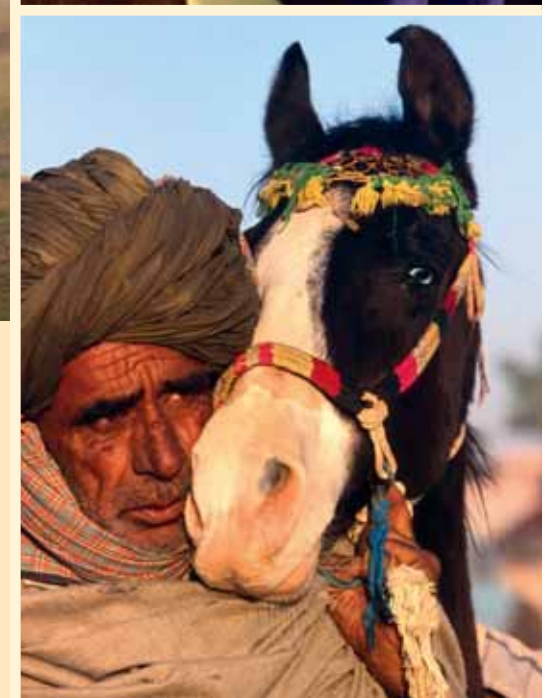
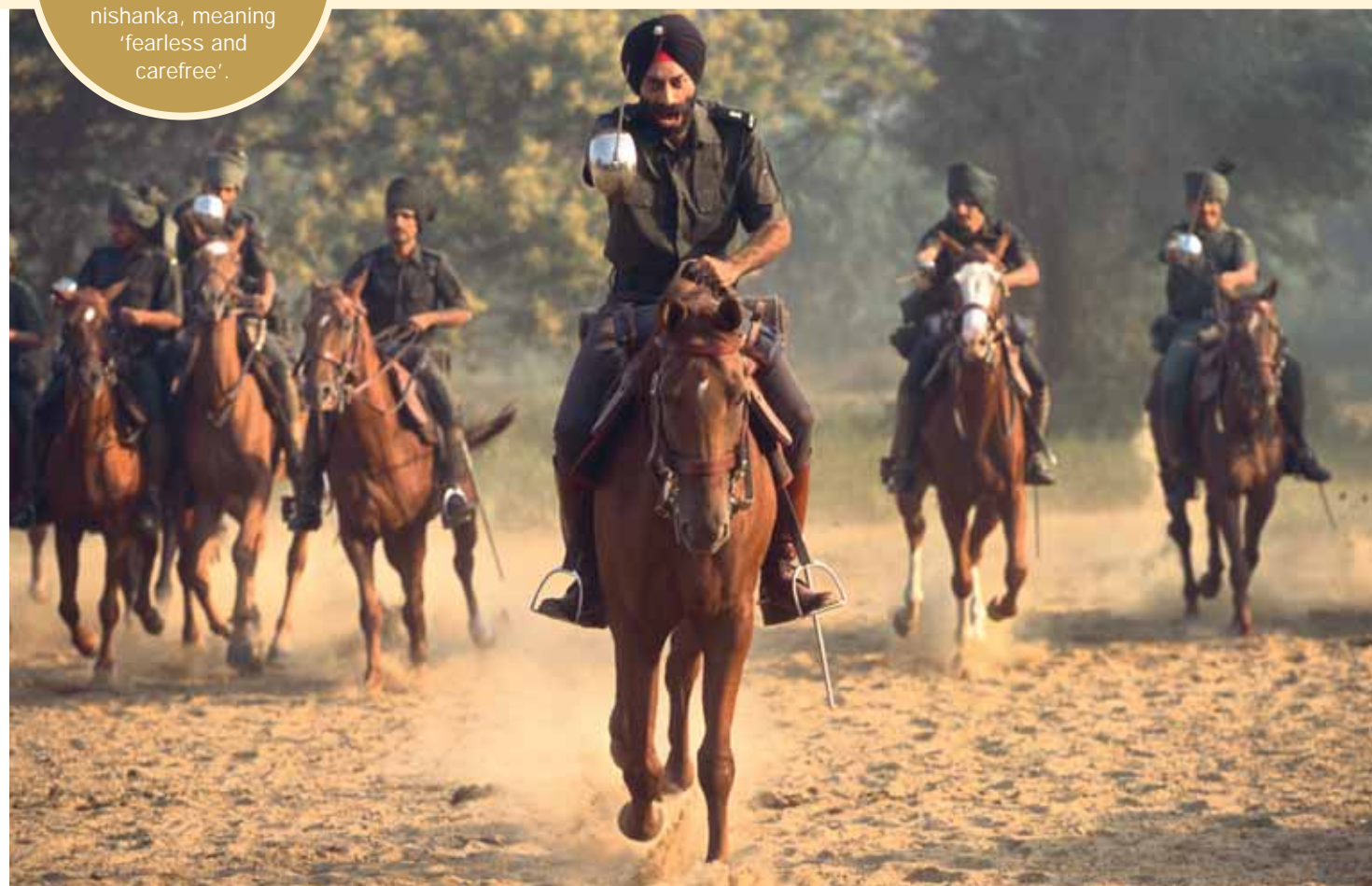
Right: Horse and camel market in the Thar desert. Below: Henry photographs a charge of 30 mounts: "They galloped right towards me, shouting, with swords directed to my chest. It was absolutely terrifying. I could only imagine the horror felt by so many infantry before them." Opposite page: Nihang Warriors have practised their chivalry and tradition on horseback for 250 years

three years and a lot of hard work – I put my heart and soul into it." This certainly comes across in the book – a completely self-published work, 'Horse Warriors' feels more like a personal photo album than it does a book. The spot-varnished photographs leap from the page and invite the reader to connect with their subjects as closely as Henry did when he pressed the shutter. Aside from a foreword and some brief history on the Indian cavalry, 'Horse Warriors' is thin on text. "I didn't want too many captions," explains Henry. "I wanted the pictures to speak for themselves. I tried to tell a story, which meant getting the balance of pictures just right – it was a lot of work." Hard work aside, Henry's talent is undeniable. "It's all about the light, that's what makes a good photo," he

"Every speckle of light is a jewel"

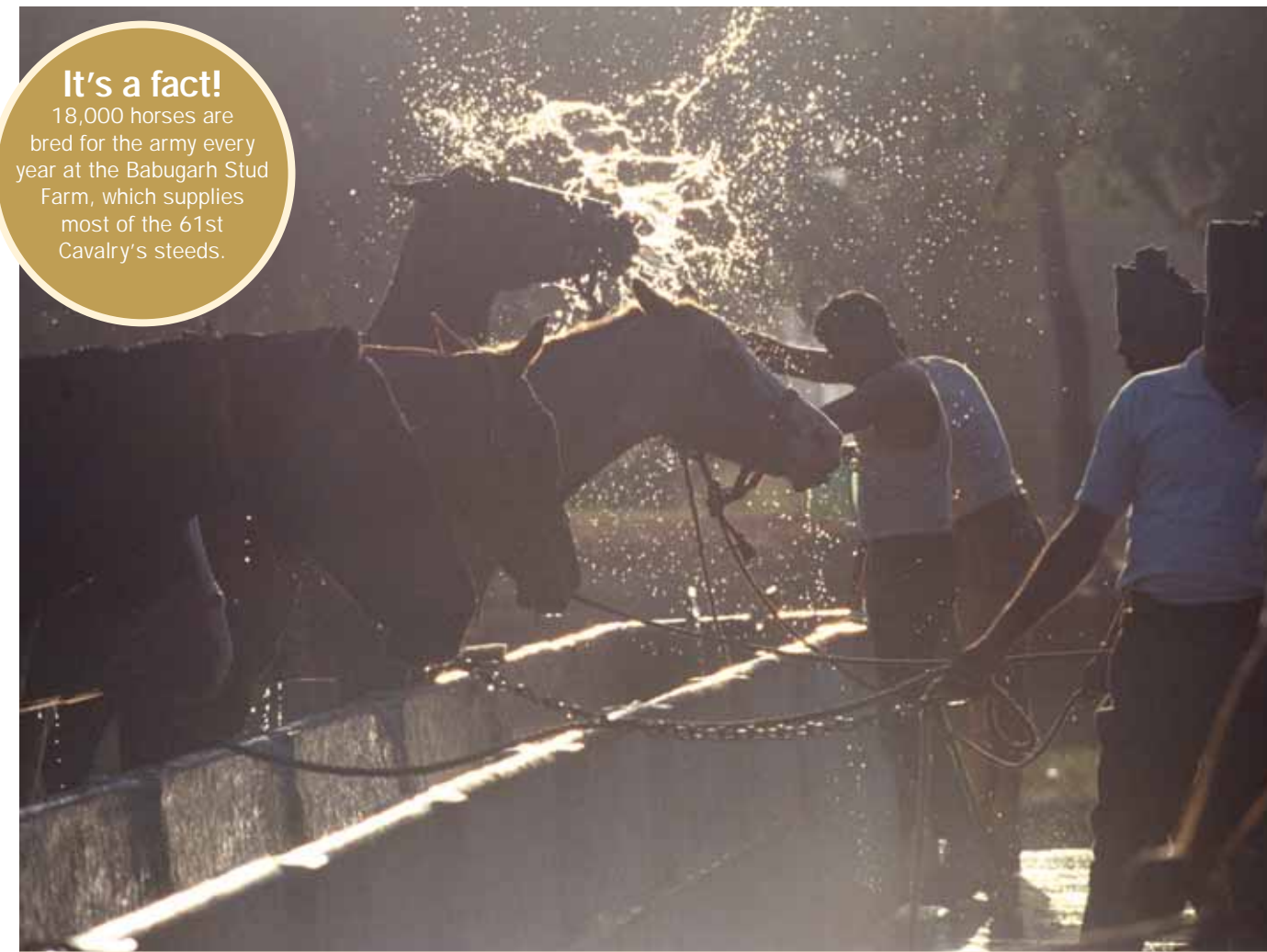
It's a fact!

The name 'Nihang' comes from the Persian word for whale or possibly from the Sanskrit nishanka, meaning 'fearless and carefree'.

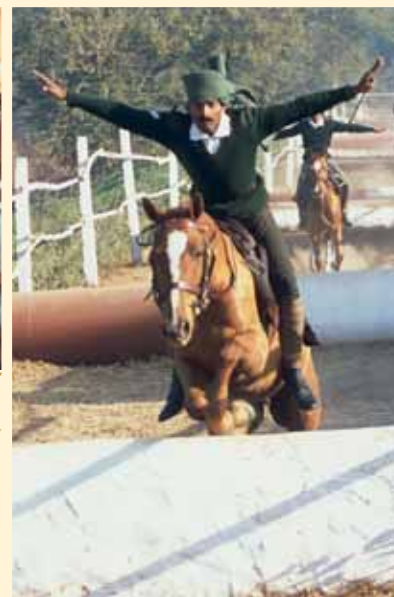


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horseworld



It's a fact!
18,000 horses are bred for the army every year at the Babugarh Stud Farm, which supplies most of the 61st Cavalry's steeds.



Of all the regiments, the Indian army has the most passion for their horses

Life inside the barracks: Of all the different regiments he has met on his travels, Henry found the Indians to be most passionate about their horses. They massage their horses twice every day (above), a moment of intimacy enjoyed by both horse and soldier

reveals. "Every speckle of light is a jewel. In India, the dust, the light – you don't get it like that anywhere else."

Henry is even creating DVDs with music to complement his slideshows, "to capture the essence and spirit of India", he explains.

It seems that not just satisfied with travelling the world by himself, Henry wants to take you there with him – and 'Horse Warriors' does exactly that. **Save £11 on 'Horse Warriors' – see p107. For more of Henry's work, visit www.henrydallalphotography.com**